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LOGAN COUNTY MAN SENTENCED TO PRISON ON FEDERAL DRUG CHARGES

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Freelin Emanuel Vance, 39, of Verdunville, Logan County, West Virginia, was sentenced yesterday to 37 months in prison and three years of supervised release by U.S. District Judge John T. Copenhaver, Jr., on federal drug charges. Vance pleaded guilty in February to distributing marijuana for remuneration. On March 18, 2010, Vance sold one-half pound of marijuana to a confidential informant working with the US 119 Drug and Violent Crime Task Force in exchange for \$800 at a Verdunville residence in Logan County. During this drug transaction, a child between five and 10 years of age was present and was filmed watching Vance weigh and measure the marijuana that was sold to the informant. Later that same month, Vance also admitted to selling approximately one-fourth pound of marijuana for \$450 to an informant at the same Verdunville residence known for other illicit drug activity.

This investigation was conducted by the US 119 Task Force. Assistant United States Attorney William King handled the prosecution.

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HUNTINGTON MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO ILLEGAL FIREARM POSSESSION CHARGE

HUNTINGTON, W.Va. – Joshua Dwayne Plante, 21, of Huntington, pleaded guilty yesterday before United States District Judge Robert C. Chambers, to possession of a sawed-off rifle. The defendant admitted to possessing firearms not registered to him in the National Firearms Registration and Transfer Record. On June 18, 2010, an agent working for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) received a telephone call from the defendant to arrange a firearm purchase between the two individuals. A short time later, Plante arrived at the Smokin' Aces store that was located in Huntington and sold a .22 caliber rifle to the ATF agent in exchange for \$225 cash. The firearm also had an obliterated or obscured serial number and it was not registered to the defendant according to the National Firearms Registration and Transfer Record. Two day prior, Plante also admitted that he sold the ATF agent a 12 gauge shotgun in exchange for \$400. Plante further admitted that he sold pistols to an ATF agent on August 24, 2010 in exchange for \$175 and on September 9, 2010, in exchange for \$205.

Plante faces up to 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine when he is sentenced on September 26, 2011.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) conducted the investigation. Assistant United States Attorney Greg McVey is in charge of the prosecution.

This case is being prosecuted as part of a yearlong undercover operation that targeted illegal drugs and firearms crimes in the Huntington area. The operation was led by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and assisted by the U.S. Attorney's Office, the Huntington Police Department, and various other law enforcement agencies. It was announced to the public in March after a grand jury returned indictments against 55 defendants.

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